

What is claimed is:

1. A method for embedding information into a digitally compressed bitstream, the method comprising the steps of:
 providing a compressed bitstream;
 identifying locations in the bitstream for embedding data into the bitstream; and
 replacing original codewords in the bitstream with alternate codewords having embedded data bits.
2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of:
 scanning the bitstream to find spatial locations for embedding data bits.
3. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of:
 scanning the bitstream to find temporal locations for embedding data bits.
4. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of:
 scanning the bitstream to find spatial or temporal locations for embedding data bits that can be reliably recovered by an error resilience decoder if the bitstream is subjected to errors during transmission.
5. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of:
 finding blocks wherein the blocks have a last non-zero coefficient having an index number of less than 63.
6. The method of Claim 1 wherein the original codewords have a triplet form of EVENT = (RUN, LEVEL, LAST) and further wherein final codewords in the bitstream have a "LAST" coefficient = 1.

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7. The method of Claim 6 further comprising the step of:
replacing the final codewords so that the final codewords have a "LAST" coefficient = 0.
8. The method of Claim 6 further comprising the step of:
appending alternate codewords to the final codewords in the bitstream.
9. The method of Claim 8 wherein the alternate codewords = "0111s" wherein the "s" corresponds to the embedded data bit.
10. The method of Claim 1 wherein the bitstream is compliant with international standards.
11. The method of Claim 1 wherein the bitstream is a video bitstream.
12. A system for embedding information into a digitally compressed bitstream, the system comprising:
a compressed bitstream;
means for identifying locations in the compressed bitstream; and
means for replacing original codewords in the bitstream with alternate codewords having embedded data bits.
13. The system of Claim 12 further comprising:
means for scanning the bitstream to locate blocks wherein the blocks contain the original codewords.
14. The system of Claim 12 wherein the bitstream has final codewords and further wherein the locations in the bitstream for embedding data into the bitstream correspond to the final codewords in the bitstream.

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15. The system of Claim 13 wherein the blocks have a last non-zero coefficient having an index number of less than 63.

16. The system of Claim 12 wherein the codewords have a triplet form of EVENT = (RUN, LEVEL, LAST) and further wherein final codewords in the bitstream have a "LAST" coefficient = 1.

17. The system of Claim 12 further comprising:

means for replacing final codewords in the bitstream with replaced codewords wherein the replaced codewords have a LAST coefficient = 0.

18. The system of Claim 17 further comprising:

means for appending alternate codewords to the replaced codewords wherein the appended codewords = "0111s" wherein the "s" represents the embedded data bit.

19. The system of Claim 12 wherein the compressed bitstream corresponds to a compressed video bitstream.

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